Approved For Release 2007/06/14 : CIA-RDP99-00498R000100060077-4

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ARTICLE APPEARED ON PAGE 1

LOS ANGELES TIMES
8 FEBRUARY 1977

Carter Picks Adm. Turner To Be Director of CIA

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WASHINGTON—President Carter Monday picked an old Naval Academy classmate, Adm. Stansfield Turner, as director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Turner, now commander of North Atlantic Alliance forces in southern Europe, has never served as an intelligence officer and therefore satisfied Carter's requirement of an "outsider" to head the CIA, according to White House Press Secretary Jody Powell.

Carter was lavish in his praise of Turner, who served as brigade commander of midshipmen in the Annapolis class of 1946. But Carter said he never knew Turner while both were at the academy.

"He was so far ahead of us that we never considered him competition or even a peer," Carter told a meeting of his Cabinet. The President's remarks to the closed meeting were relayed to reporters by Dep. Press Secretary Rex Granum.

Turner stood 25th academically in the 820-member class. Carter was 59th.

"I think you will all be pleased with Stan Turner," Granum quoted Carter as saying. "I have never known a better military person."

Administration officials said that Carter was anxious to name a CIA director who could be confirmed quickly, and without much controversy, by the Senate. Carter's first choice, Theodore C. Sorensen, withdrew from consideration after it became clear he had little chance of being approved by the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Turner made a quick trip to Capitol Hill Monday to meet some of the members of the committee.

A spokesman for Sen. Adlai E. Stevenson III (D-Ill.) said the senator had been "impressed" with Turner. The spokesman said Stevenson knew no reason why the admiral would not be confirmed.

But some other members of the committee said they did not know Turner well enough to speculate about his chances. A spokesman for Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.) said the White House had indicated it would not attempt to rush the nomination through the Senate without giving the lawmakers ample time to inquire about Turner's plans for the CIA.

An intelligence source described Turner as an innovative admiral who should be able to solve many of the morale and administrative problems that have plagued the CIA in recent years.

Powell said that Carter had not yet selected the civilian who will be Turner's chief deputy. Federal law requires a civilian to hold one of the agency's two top jobs. In recent years, the director has been a civilian and his deputy a uniformed military man, but the order occasionally has been reversed.

Turner, 53, was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford after his Naval Academy graduation. He earned a master's degree in philosophy, politics and economics at Oxford.

"He was a superior academic," Carter told the Cabinet. "He was a five striper (the top midshipman rank) and a superb all-around athlete.

"I think as you meet him, you will find him a military person who in the future could be the next George Marshall," Carter said.

Marshall, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II, served after the war as both secretary of state and secretary of defense in the Truman administration. He was the author of the Marshall Plan to rebuild war-torn Europe.

Turner returned to Washington from his command in Naples to discuss the CIA job with Carter last week.

Powell said that Turner had been a major user of intelligence reports in his role as a strategic planner. But the press secretary added that Turner has never been a part of the intelligence community the President has selected him to lead.

If confirmed, Turner will serve as the overall coordinator of intelligence activities as well as CIA director. Other intelligence agencies include the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency and the intelligence arms of each of the military services.

Born in Highland Park, Ill., Turner attended Amherst College in 1941 before his appointment to the Naval Academy. He and his wife, Patricia, have two married children.

Turner has had his European command since Sept. 1, 1975. Previously, he was commander of the 2nd Fleet. He was president of the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., from June 30, 1972, until Aug. 14, 1974.

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